

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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P R 040722Z MAY 78
FM USLO PEKING
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0621
INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 1255

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT CH
SUBJ: MAY DAY OBSERVANCES IN PEKING

1. ADDRESSEES WILL HAVE NOTED, AND PERHAPS EVEN INDULGED IN, THE GENERAL SPECULATION CONCERNING THE FAILURE TO MARK THIS MAY DAY IN PEKING WITH THE USUAL "GALA FESTIVITIES" AND LEADERSHIP TURNOUTS IN THE PARKS. THE PEKING DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY HAS PUZZLED OVER THIS MATTER FITFULLY DURING THE PAST WEEK WITHOUT COMING TO ANY PARTICULARLY COMPELLING CONCVESIONS.

2. FOR THE RECORD, CHINESE INFORMATION DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS PASSED THE WORD BEFOREHAND THAT WHEREAS IN 1977 THE CHINESE PEOPLE WISHED TO DEMONSTRATE THEIR ELATION AT THE SMASHING OF THE GANG OF FOUR THE PRECEDING AUTUMN, IN 1978 THEY WERE MORE INTERESTED IN WORKING TOWARD THE PRESSING GOAL OF THE FOUR MODERNIZATIONS. HENCE THERE WOULD BE NO COSTLY AND TIME-CONSUMING DISPLAYS IN PEKING'S PARKS. ANOTHER RATIONALIZATION WAS OFFERED BY MFA WEST EUROPEAN AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT DEPUTY DIRECTOR CHI TSUNG-HUA, WHO TOLD WEST GERMAN EMBOFFS THAT THE LEADERSHIP

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HAD DECIDED ON A "MORE DEMOCARTIC" COMMEMORATION OF MAY DAY THIS YEAR: WHEREAS ADMITTANCE TO THE PARKS WAS BY TICKET ONLY IN THE PAST, THIS YEAR THE PARKS WOULD BE OPEN TO ALL FREE OF CHARGE.

3. FOR THEIR PART, EAST EUROPEANS HAVE BEEN PUSHING THE LINE THAT THE NONCELEBRATION IS REMINISCENT OF CANCELLATION OF NATIONAL DAY OBSERVANCES IN 1971 FOLLOWING LIN PIAO'S ABORTIVE

COUP. THE CHINESE LEADERSHIP, CLAIM THE EAST EUROPEANS, IS
UNCERTAIN OF ITSELF AND OF THE CHINESE CITIZENS.

4. COMMENT: CHINESE EXPLANATIONS SMACK OF RATIONALIZATION WHILE
EAST EUROPEAN STATEMENTS REEK OF DISINFORMATION. THE "DEMOCRACY"
AGRUMENT IS SHAKEN BY THE FAILURE OF THE LEADERSHIP TO MINGLE
DEMOCRATICALLY WITH THE MASSES AS THEY HAD IN THE PAST;
THE "WORKING FOR THE 4 MODERNIZATIONS" THESIS IS ERODED BY THE
FACT THAT THE CHINESE WERE GIVEN THE USUAL TWO DAYS OFF FROM
THEIR JOBS; AND THE EAST EUROPEAN LINE IS UNDERCUT BY THE
APPEARANCE OF ALL POLITBURO-LEVEL LEADERS, EVEN THOSE UNDER
RECENT POSTER ATTACK, FOR MAY DAY OBSERVANCES. ULTIMATELY,
ONE COMES OUT WITH THE SENSE THAT SIGNALS WERE SOMEHOW CROSSED
WITHIN THE CHINESE LEADERSHIP, THAT A DECISION ON HANDLING OF
MAY DAY WAS DEFERRED UNTIL THE LAST POSSIBLE MOMENT, TOO LATE
FORA CONVINCING AND UNIFIED LINE TO BE PUT OUT TO INTERESTED
FOREIGNERS. PARTY VICE CHAIRMAN YEH CHIEN-YING'S UNEXPECTED
APPEARANCE IN CANTON (WHERE HE OFTEN RESTS) FOR MAY DAY IS
CONCEIVABLY RELATED TO THE CONFUSED HANDLING OF THE EVENT.
WOODCOCK

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NNN

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